

Pixelversity 2011: Unconference on Art and Sustainability

28 July — 31 July 2011

MIM Project studio, Pällu village, Pällu, EE



This unconference event during the summer, from 28-31st July, was a meeting of local, regional or international practitioners and organisers in the Estonian countryside (35km from Tallinn), to address the pressing topic of art & energy sustainability in cultural production.

In the art, festival and theatre worlds in general, the environmental impact and energy use of various technologies is rarely talked about. Although many artists do address environmental themes in their work, there is very little discussion about the environmental effects of the process itself. Theatre performance uses much electricity live for its light and sound, while electronic arts consumes energy in all aspects of its material component manufacturing, production, performance, distribution and presentation.

This occasion served as a networking and sharing event about recent progress on the topic, and was a follow up event to last year's Pixelversity workshop on Art & Sustainability, a collaboration between MIM Project (mimproject.org) and Koelse (koelse.org) in Helsinki. This time we gathered at MIM project's home and studio across the Gulf of Finland in Estonia.

Schedule & attendance

Thursday 28 July - Sunday 31 July

An unconference -style event is not necessarily an academic event, and the schedule was determined according to open plan (who turns up has an opportunity to contribute to the programme). The unconference/weekend was open to anyone and free (although it mostly was attended by 1st degree contacts with the organisers or hosts). It took place in the hosts personal home and space. Several family members attended in addition to participants.

Antti Ahonen (FI), **Natalia Borissova** (RU/DE), **Tomi Flinck** (FI), **Taavet Jansen** (EE), **Anna Karpenko** (RU), **Maike Lond** (EE), **Sara Milazzo** (FI), **Andrew Gryf Paterson** (SCO/FI), **Terina Tikka** (EE), **Emmi Vainio** (FI), **Taavi "Miisu" Varm** (EE), **Eero Yli-Vakkuri** (FI), **Inga Zālīte** (LV).

Attendees were encouraged to gather on Thursday early evening in Tallinn, and travelled together from there to the unconference/residence venue location. Friday was dedicated to visiting different places in Tallinn for many of the attendees (see below), and the final participants came on Friday evening.

Unconference Day: Saturday 30th from 13.00-ish onwards

The programme for the unconference day was made in the morning of Saturday 30th. The basic idea is to share & update on your work related to the topic, reflections on how your activities could be more energy-sustainable. Talks, discussions, screenings, activities, workshops were all possible to add to the weekend schedule.

13.15-14.15: Introduction round-circle

14.30-17.30: Talks

- * Eero Yli-Vakkuri: Ore.e (Ore & refineries): Sustainability as Craft & launch of NO-CHAIR-DESIGN Challenge
- * Koesle & MIM project
- * Inga Zelīte: IdejuTalka
- * Sara Milazzo: Wasteland Festival

17.30-19.30: Dinner making & eating

19.30-21.30: Strategies & future plans

- * Andrew Paterson: Pixelversity background & 2012 plans
- * Natalia Borissova & Anna Karpenko: Kaliningrad expedition

22.00-23.30: IdejuTalka workshop led by Inga Zālīte

00.00-01.00: Midnight Clip Kino

01.00- ...: Epic talks!

Travel & Camping

The event was located at MIM Project's studio in the Estonian countryside/forest, near to Pällu village, Saue parish, 35km south-west from Tallinn.

Several groups travelled from Helsinki on Thursday (car & ferry passengers), and Friday, while regional buses from Kaliningrad & Riga were used. During the weekend 3 cars were used to travel between the countryside and the city.

The MIM project's countryside home (and studio) hosted the majority of participants in the end, due to heavy rain over the weekend, but camping in 2-4 tents were also used within the garden.

Organising contacts:

Taavet Jansen (local): taavetjansen [-ät-] gmail.com

Andrew Paterson (international): andrew [-ät-] pixelache.ac

Background

As part of Pixelversity last year, MIM project from Estonia & Koelse/Association for Experimental Electronics from Helsinki co-organised a workshop in January 2010 on the theme of Art and Sustainability at Ptarmigan, resulting in the Self-sufficient Party Container presented at Pixelache Helsinki Festival.

Since then MIM Project has continued to develop their work in Estonia, Finland and elsewhere, while Koelse and fellow Finnish experimental electronics association Kokomys, have extended their explorations into the use of small scale hand-crank, solar and wind power generation.

In the past year, there has been discussion among Pixelache association members reflecting on how to make our festival more energy-appropriate, and what would be the related pedagogy necessary to do so.

Image credit: Taavet Jansen.

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